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## **AG MARSHALL CALLS ON ALABAMIANS TO OBSERVE OCTOBER AS NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH**

(MONTGOMERY) – Attorney General Steve Marshall called on Alabamians to observe October as National Domestic Violence Awareness Month by recognizing the terrible costs of lives lost and damaged, celebrating and honoring those who have struggled and survived, and supporting those who dedicate themselves to assist and advocate for victims of this tragic crime.

“Public awareness is a vital weapon against domestic violence,” said Attorney General Marshall. “This is a pervasive and secretive crime because offenders try to make victims believe the attacks are their own fault, and use the victims’ affection and dependence to keep them trapped in a vicious cycle. Sadly, whether we realize it or not, all of us know people whose lives have been marked by domestic violence. Victims need to know that they are not alone, that they need not be ashamed, and that they may be provided with justice.”

Nearly one in three adult women will be physically assaulted by a partner, but only one fourth of such assaults are ever reported to police, according to statistics from the Alabama Coalition Against Domestic Violence’s webpage. Last year in Alabama, 18 percent of all violent offenses reported were domestic violence incidents, according to the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency’s Statistical Analysis Center. There were indications of domestic violence in 4,611 of all offenses, including 43 homicides, 238 rapes, 95 robberies, and 4,235 aggravated assaults.

Victims may seek help by calling the Alabama Coalition Against Domestic Violence (ACADV) crisis line at 1-800-650-6522 or the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233. Another available resource, called “Love is Respect,” has a hotline at 1-866-331-9474, or may be reached by texting ‘loveis’ to the number 22522. The U.S. National Sexual Assault Hotline – 1-800-656-4673 – automatically connects to a local rape crisis program based on the caller’s area code. A list of safe shelters and other resources is available through the ACADV website at <http://www.acadv.org/get-help/shelters>.

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Attorney General Marshall commended the valuable services of victims' advocates throughout Alabama who provide information and assistance to domestic violence victims. "Caring volunteers and professionals hear the cries of victims who were betrayed by those closest to them. It can begin with someone just listening and caring, and then showing the victims a way out where they had felt trapped and lost. Oftentimes, survivors may provide the strength and understanding to help others." Throughout this month, the Attorney General is privately visiting with advocates and victims at domestic abuse shelters in Alabama.

He also thanked the staff of the Attorney General's Office of Victim Assistance, who work with victims and their families to provide information and help in understanding various steps throughout the judicial process. They can be reached toll-free at 1-800-626-7676, or through the Attorney General's webpage at [www.ago.alabama.gov](http://www.ago.alabama.gov).

As a long-time prosecutor, Steve Marshall has been a champion for domestic violence victims both as Attorney General and for the previous 16 years as the District Attorney for Marshall County. Under his tenure, the Marshall County District Attorney's Office was recognized by the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs as a model domestic violence prosecution program. He successfully supported passage of "Kelley's Law" which makes it a capital crime to murder someone who has a protective order against the offender and was named in honor of a Marshall County woman who was murdered.

"It will take all of us working together to fight domestic violence. Friends and families, local community members, victims' advocates, law enforcement and prosecutors, we all stand with those who need our help to survive and overcome, to see that offenders are stopped and punished, and to remember and honor those who were lost," said Attorney General Marshall.